

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-10 EA-07 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00
OMB-01 ACDA-07 DHA-02 EB-07 AID-05 OES-07 FEAE-00
ERDA-05 COME-00 CEA-01 /143 W
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R 131740Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4970
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY NASSAU
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AMEMBASSY MBABANE
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AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
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E. O. 11652:NA

TAGS: PFOR, XX, XF

SUBJECT: COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE AND AFRICA

SUMMARY AND COMMENT: THIS CABLE ATTEMPTS TO GIVE A FLAVOR OF THE EXCHANGES WHICH HAVE SO FAR CHARACTERIZED THE INITIAL PHASE OF THE COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE IN LONDON. IT IS DEVOTED EXCLUSIVELY TO AFRICAN ISSUES (A SEPARATE CABLE WILL FOLLOW ON ECONOMIC QUESTIONS) WHICH HAVE TENDED TO DOMINATE THE DISCUSSIONS. MUCH OF IT IS PREDICTABLE, WITH NON-PACIFIC THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES ATTACKING BRITAIN FOR ITS REPEATED FAILURES TO SETTLE THE RHODESIA CRISIS AND CALLING FOR STERNER ACTION. PRES. KAUNDA, WHO HAS LED THESE FORCES, HAS DESPAIRED OF NEGOTIATIONS AS A REALISTIC INSTRUMENT IN THE QUEST FOR MAJORITY RULE IN RHODESIA. THE BRITISH--WHO HAVE CARRIED THE DEFENSIVE BURDEN OF THE DEBATE--HAVE SOUGHT TO ENHANCE THE DESIRABILITY AND PRACTICALITY OF NEGOTIATION WHILE AT THE SAME TIME ACCEPTING THAT THE ARMED STRUGGLE MUST GO ON. WHILE THE EXCHANGES ON THE ISSUE HAVE BEEN TOUGH AND SOMETIMES HOSTILE, THEIR EFFECT WILL EMERGE AS DELEGATIONS ATTEMPT TO DRAFT A COMMUNIQUE. WE UNDERSTAND THE KAUNDA CAMP IS PROPOSING A PROGRAM OF ACTION ON SOUTHERN AFRICA WHICH ENDORSES THE MAPUTO

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DECLARATION. BRITAIN, CANADA AND THE PACIFIC COUNTRIES ARE RESISTING SUCH SPECIFIC COMMITMENTS. END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

1. THE OPENING DAYS OF THE 22ND COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT SUMMIT IN LONDON INDICATED THAT, ON THE POLITICAL PLAN AT LEAST, THE MEMBER COUNTRIES HAVE LITTLE IN COMMON BEYOND LANGUAGE, AND MUCH OF THAT IS HEATED. AFRICAN ISSUES DOMINATED THE INITIAL DEBATES AND ARE LIKELY TO EXACERBATE RELATIONSHIPS ON THE CONFERENCE ATTEMPTS TO DRAFT A COMMUNIQUE.

2. THE IMPACT OF AFRICA ON THE COMMONWEALTH WAS UNDERSCORED EVEN BEFORE THE STATESMEN BEGAN THEIR DISCUSSIONS. TWO CHAIRS AROUND THE LANCASTER HOUSE TABLE WOULD REMAIN UNOCCUPIED: SEYCHELLES AND UGANDA. THE COUP THAT DEPOSED JAMES MANCHAM AS PRESIDENT OF THE SEYCHELLES NOT ONLY UNDERSCORED THE FRAGILITY OF MOST GOVERNMENTS IN THE WORLD BUT ALSO PROVED TO SOME A FITTING EXAMPLE OF SINGAPORE'S LEE KUAN YEW'S PROVOCATIVE

WARNING TO HIS COLLEAGUES ABOUT THE DANGERS OF INTER-
NATIONAL COMMUNISM. THE WILL-BE-OR-WON'T-BE SAGA OF
AMIN'S ATTENDANCE AT THE CONFERENCE MOVED FROM THE
LUDICROUS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE WEEK TO THE OMINOUS
BY THE END WHEN UGANDA RADIO ANNOUNCED THE ARREST OF

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A "BRITISH SPY" IN KAMPALA. YET SOME THIRD WORLD LEADERS, NOTABLY MICHAEL MANLEY AND KENNETH KAUNDA DID NOT HESITATE TO MAKE FORCEFUL CONDEMNATIONS OF THE UGANDAN LEADER AND THUS OPEN THE QUESTION HOW THE COMMONWEALTH SHOULD DISCIPLINE ONE OF ITS MEMBERS. (NIGERIA'S BUGADIN YAR "ADUA, APPARENTLY ATTRACTED TO A MAVERICK ROLE, RAISED A PROCEDURAL ISSUE: "WE SHOULD NOT PASS A RESOLUTION ABOUT A FELLOW MEMBER OR HIS COUNTRY WHEN HE IS NOT PRESENT AT THE CONFERENCE TABLE. . . . WE DO NOT WANT A PRECEDENT SET NOW ABOUT THE EXCLUSION OF ONE MEMBER BY ANOTHER.")

3. THE MAJOR ATTENTION OF SUBSTANTIVE DEBATE AT THE CONFERENCE HAS SO FAR FOCUSED ON SOUTHERN AFRICA AND, PARTICULARLY, RHODESIA. PRIME MINISTER CALLAGHAN, IN HIS OPENING REMARKS AS CHAIRMAN, ATTEMPTED TO TAKE THE ANTICIPATED WIND OUT OF HIS CRITICS' SAILS BY ISSUING A STERN WARNING TO THE WHITE COMMUNITIES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. HE SIGNIFICANTLY ADDRESSED WHITE DOMINANCE IN THE REGION AS A WHOLE, MAKING LITTLE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE QUASI-COLONIAL SITUATIONS IN RHODESIA AND NAMIBIA AND THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA ITSELF. "AT
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ROOT (OF THE TENSION THERE) LIES THE FRUSTRATION AND HUMILIATION OF SYSTEMATIC DENIAL OF BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS," HE DECLARED. "THE DREADFUL CONSEQUENCE IS THAT THERE IS AN EVER INCREASING NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO

SEE THE GUN AS THE ONLY MEANS OF WINNING FREEDOM. THEY WILL BE PROVED RIGHT UNLESS THOSE RULING MINORITIES QUICKLY CHANGE THEIR ATTITUDE. . . TODAY, MORE THAN EVER BEFORE, THE ISSUES OF PEACE AND WAR, OF RACIAL HARMONY OR RACIAL CONFLICT, HANG IN THE BALANCE."

4. PRIME MINISTER CALLAGHAN, HOWEVER, FAILED TO STEAL THE MARCH ON MOST OF HIS COLLEAGUES. PRESIDENT KAUNDA, WHOSE SPEECH OPENED THE RHODESIAN DEBATE, INDICATED HIS DEEP SUSPICION OF THE CURRENT ANGLO-AMERICAN CONSULTATIVE EFFORT, DERIDING THESE INNUMERABLE "TALKS ABOUT TALKS" AND FRESH MISSIONS TO AFRICA BY SUCCESSIVE BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARIES. "THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN CRISIS IS NOT A SUBJECT FOR POLITICAL JUGGLING," HE SAID. "THERE ARE NO GAMES TO PLAY. THERE ARE NO DIPLOMATIC VICTORIES TO SCORE AND NO TIME TO BUY YET NEWER GIMMICKS OR CLEVER STRATAGEMS.

5. EVEN TOUGHER, BRIGADIER YAR 'ADUA ATTACKED THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT FOR "WRINGING THEIR HANDS IN DISGRACEFUL, DISGUSTING HELPLESSNESS FOR 12 YEARS." THE NIGERIAN COUPLED HIS DISAPPROVAL WITH AN IMPLICATION THAT HIS COUNTRY IN CONSEQUENCE MIGHT WITHDRAW FROM THE COMMONWEALTH: "NIGERIA, LIKE EVERY OTHER MEMBER (OF THE COMMONWEALTH), RESERVES THE RIGHT TO WITHDRAW FROM THIS INFORMAL CLUB IF IT FINDS THAT THE PRESENT OPERATION OF THE COMMONWEALTH MAKES A MOCKERY OF THE IDEALS AND ASPIRATIONS OF ITS MEMBER STATES."

6. IN FACE OF THESE HARSH ATTACKS, CALLAGHAN AND FOREIGN SECRETARY OWEN STEPPED TO THE DEFENSE NOT ONLY OF HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT, BUT PERHAPS MORE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IMPORTANTLY, TO THE CONCEPT OF NEGOTIATIONS AS A LEGITIMATE AVENUE FOR RESOLVING CONFLICTS IN THE REGION. "WE ARE NOT CONCERNED WITH FINDING SCAPEGOATS FROM THE PAST," CALLAGHAN INSERTED POINTEDLY. "THERE IS SOMETIMES A TENDENCY TO THINK OF BRITAIN AS AN IMPERIAL POWER AND TO IMAGINE THAT IT ONLY HAD TO RAISE ITS LITTLE FINGER FOR MR. SMITH, AND EVEN MR. VORSTER, TO FALL IN LINE."

7. FOLLOWING CALLAGHAN'S APPEAL FOR BELIEF IN BRITAIN'S SINCERITY, OWEN FOLLOWED WITH A LENGTHY SPEECH IN WHICH HE CLAIMED THAT "AS LONG AS THE POSSIBILITY, HOWEVER SMALL, OF A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT EXISTS, IT IS THE INESCAPABLE MORAL OBLIGATION OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO CONTINUE TO SEARCH FOR PEACE." HE STRESSED THAT INDEPENDENCE FOR RHODESIA IN 1978 REMAINS AN ESSENTIAL

OBJECTIVE, BUT ONE WHICH BRITAIN CANNOT ACHIEVE ALONE.
THE BLUNT TRUTH IS THAT WITHOUT THE FULL WEIGHT OF
"AMERICAN MORAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC INFLUENCE BEHIND
US, PARTICULARLY OVER THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD AND THE
EARLY YEARS OF AN INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE, THE PROSPECTS
FOR A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT IN RHODESIA ARE NEGLIGIBLE.
OUR CRITICS CANNOT HAVE IT BOTH WAYS."

8. THE VIGOR OF ALL THESE STATEMENTS ON RHODESIA
WILL BE TESTED IN EFFORTS BEFORE THE END OF THE CONFER-

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ENCE TO DEVELOP AN AGREED PROGRAM OF ACTION. THE MILITANTS, LED BY KAUNDA, ARE INSISTING ON A TIGHTENING OF SANCTIONS AGAINST THE REBEL COLONY. THE ZAMBIAN IS DEMANDING A CLEAR INSTRUCTION TO THE COMMONWEALTH SANCTIONS COMMITTEE TO DRAFT A LIST OF ADDITIONAL SANCTIONS AND FORWARD IT TO THE UNITED NATIONS WITH THE AUTHORITY OF ALL MEMBER GOVERNMENTS. THE NEW MEASURES WOULD INCLUDE A CALL FOR GOVERNMENTS TO FORCE INTERNATIONAL OIL COMPANIES TO HALT SUPPLIES TO RHODESIA. OTHER MEASURES WOULD APPLY TO TELECOMMUNICATIONS, BANKS AND INSURANCE. KAUNDA IS ALSO CALLING FOR INCREASED COMMONWEALTH ASSISTANCE TO THE FRONT-LINE STATES AS WELL AS MATERIAL AND FINANCIAL AID TO THE GUERRILLAS. HE HAS EXPANDED THE BASE OF HIS SUPPORT TO INCLUDE NON-AFRICAN COUNTRIES (JAMAICA'S MANLEY: "IT IS TRAGIC THAT THE FIGHTING HAS BEGUN BUT IT IS MORALLY RIGHT AS WELL AS PRACTICAL THAT WHEN GOVERNMENTS BELIEVE THAT A WAR IS RIGHT THEY SHOULD CONTRIBUTE TO IT . . . THE SUMMIT MUST GO BEYOND RHETORIC AND PROVIDE A PROGRAM OF ACTION WITH CONCRETE SUGGESTIONS." INDIA'S VAJPAYEE: "SANCTIONS MUST BE TIGHTENED AND OIL EXPORTS STOPPED UNTIL MR. SMITH GIVES UP HIS

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DESPERATE POLICIES.")

9. THE TIGHTENING OF SANCTIONS AGAINST RHODESIA COULD PROVE THE MOST DIFFICULT AND DIVISIVE TOPIC OF THE CONFERENCE. INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS OVER THE WEEKEND, WHEN THE GOVERNMENT LEADERS RETREATED TO A RESORT HOTEL IN GLENEAGLES, SCOTLAND, MAY HAVE SMOOTHED THE ROAD BUT THE PROOF WILL LIE IN THE WORDING OF THE FINAL COMMUNIQUE.

10. IF THE DELEGATES ARE UNABLE TO AGREE TO A SPECIFIC PROGRAM OF ACTION AGAINST RHODESIA, THEY MAY AT LEAST BE ABLE TO RESOLVE THEIR DIFFERENCES ON ANOTHER AFRICA-RELATED ISSUE AFFECTING THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES. NEW ZEALAND'S PRIME MINISTER MULDOON, MUCH TO THE SURPRISE OF HIS AUDIENCE, BROADLY ENDORSED THE MAPUTO DECLARATION AND THEREBY SIGNALLED HIS SYMPATHETIC UNDERSTANDING OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN ISSUES. SHORTLY AFTERWARDS A FOUR-NATION COMMITTEE (NIGERIA, ZAMBIA, TANZANIA, AND CANADA) WAS ORGANIZED TO SEARCH WITH MULDOON FOR A COMPROMISE WHICH WOULD PERMIT THE GAMES IN EDMONTON TO GO FORWARD. WE UNDERSTAND DELEGATIONS ARE OPTIMISTIC THAT A SATISFACTORY SOLUTION CAN BE FOUND.

LL. WE WILL REPORT SEPARATELY ON THE DISCUSSIONS CONCERNING THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER, WHICH WILL BE THE FOCUS OF THE FINAL TWO DAYS OF THE CONFERENCE.

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